

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 05480 220557Z

11

ACTION EA-14

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5487

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 5480

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, PINS, KS

SUBJECT: ROK ANNOYANCE WITH JAPAN

REF: (A) SEOUL 5410; (B) SEOUL 5437

1. PRIME MINISTER KIM JONG-PIL, IN FORTY MINUTE TELEVISION SPEECH TO NATION IN EVENING AUGUST 20, ADDRESSED SUBJECTS OF CABINET RESIGNATIONS AND MUN ASSASSINATION INVESTIGATION. THOUGH REITERATING NORTH KOREAN COMPLICITY IN CRIME, HE DEVOTED LARGE SEGMENT OF SPEECH TO SUBJECT OF JAPANESE RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRADEY.

2. IN REACTION TO STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO JAPANESE FOREIGN OFFICE SOURCES ALLEGEDLY DENYING JAPANESE MORAL OR LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT (REFTELS), PRIMIN EXPRESSED HOPE THIS WAS NOT OFFICIAL ATTITUDE OF GOJ AND IMPLIED JAPAN, ON THE CONTRARY, DID HAVE SUCH RESPONSIBILITY.

3. KIM TOOK PAINS TO POINT OUT THAT MUN SE-KWANG WAS RESIDING IN JAPANESE TERRITORY WHERE JAPANESE LAW WAS IN FORCE, AND THAT DUE TO RELAXED DISCIPLINE OF JAPANESE AUTHORITIES, MUN WAS ABLE TO STEAL WEAPONS
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PAGE 02 SEOUL 05480 220557Z

FROM POLICE AND TO OBTAIN PASSPORT FOR TRIP TO SEOUL.

4. KOREA HERALD, IN RELATED STORY, QUOTED GOVERNMENT SOURCES THAT ROKG WAS CONSIDERING PROTEST AGAINST JAPANESE GOVERNMENT'S "PASSIVE ATTITUDE" IN INVESTIGATION ASSASSINATION PLOT. THESE SOURCES SAID JAPANESE ATTITUDE WAS "RECKLESS AND IRRESPONSIBLE."

5. FONMIN KIM TOLD CHARGE AIWUST 1? THAT, WHILE ROKG APPRECIATED FACT THAT PRIMIN TANAKA HAD MADE SIGNIFICANT GESTURE IN COMING TO SEOUL TO ATTEND FUNERAL, BENEFICIAL EFFECT HAD BEEN LARGELY VITIATED BY ALLEGED STATEMENT FROM GAIMUSHO ON LACK OF JAPANESE RESPONSIBILITY. FONMIN WAS INCLINED TO ATTRIBUTE STATEMENT PERSONALLY TO FONMIN KIMURA, WHO HE SAID WAS REGARDED EVEN BY SENIOR JAPANESE POLITICIANS AS "UNRELIABLE." KIM SAID KOREANS COULD ALSO APPRECIATE FACT THAT GOJ MIGHT NOT HAVE LEGAL AUTHORITY TO BRING VARIOUS JAPANESE INVOLVED IN CASE TO TRIAL SOLELY ON EVIDENCE OBTAINED FROM ASSASSIN, AND ACKNOWLEDGED THAT JAPANESE POLICE WERE COOPERATING WELL AT LEAST TO EXTENT OF FURNISHING INFORMATION BASED ON THEIR INVESTIGATION OF ASSASSIN'S CONTACTS AND ACTIVITIES IN JAPAN. NEVERTHELESS, JAPANESE COULD NOT DENY SOME RESPONSIBILITY, AND IF THEY COULD NOT ACKNOWLEDGE THIS TO BE CASE, THEY SHOULD AT LEAST "KEEP THEIR MOUTHS SHUT" ON SUBJECT. HE SAID HE WOULD BE SEEING JAPANESE AMBASSADOR USHIROKU LATER IN DAY TO MAKE VIEWS OF HIS GOVERNMENT KNOWN ON THIS SUBJECT AND TO HEAR WHATEVER EXPLANATION USHIROKU WAS ABLE TO OFFER.

6. COMMENT: ROKG HIGH LEVEL ANNOYANCE OVER ALLEGED GOJ REFUSAL TO ACCEPT SOME RESPONSIBILITY IS VERY REAL. AT SAME TIME ROKG IS ALSO APPARENTLY USING PRESENT SITUATION FOR OTHER PURPOSES TO KEEP GOJ ON DEFENSIVE, POSSIBLY TO COUNTER OR MUTE ANY JAPANESE REACTION TO ROKG AUGUST 14 STATEMENT ANNOUNCING KIM TAE CHUNG KIDNAPPING CASE CLOSED. PRESS SOURCE TELLS US MCUI IS SUBSIDIZING TRIP TO OSAKA FOR SOME KOREAN REPORTERS TO FILE ANTI-JAPANESE STORIES.
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 SEOUL 05480 220557Z

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